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REMARKS

Claims 1 and 5 are amended. The amendments find support in the application as originally filed. In particular, the Examiner is referred to page 5 lines 18-24 and original claim 9 that describes reacting pigment particles with an epoxy compound to provide a surface treatment. No new matter is added by the amendments.

Claims 1-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Yamauchi et al. (US 3,988,288). Applicants traverse the rejection to the extent that it can be maintained.

Applicants claim a pigment reacted with an epoxy compound to provide a surface treatment for the pigment, the epoxy compound having no silicon-containing group. A dispersion that includes the treated pigment and a method for surface treating pigment particles are also claimed. The chemical reaction of pigment particles with an epoxy compound provides a treatment of the particles useful for preparing dispersions. The viscosity of dispersions using the treated pigment of the present invention is significantly less than a dispersion made from untreated pigment. This result also enables the amount of dispersant required to disperse pigment to be reduced after the pigment surface is treated according to the invention (e.g. page 4 lines 7-19 and Tables 1 and 2 summarizing comparative results).

Yamauchi et al. disclose a powder paint that does not use a volatile dispersing medium. The powder paint composition of Yamauchi et al comprises a pigment and a powdered amino polyester resin and a powdered polyepoxide compound (column 7 lines 40-51 and examples 1 and 3). The powder paint is useful in thermal powder coating technology. The resin and epoxy compound undergo a cross linking reaction to form a film when applied to a heated surface (column 3 lines 5-7, 28-37 and column 4 lines 1-16). Pigments are simply incorporated into the film as colorants, opacifiers, etc. and do not chemically react with the polyepoxide compound.

Yamauchi et al. fail to disclose a pigment composition comprising particles reacted with an epoxy compound to provide a surface treatment of the pigment. There is no disclosure that the powder epoxy compound undergoes any reaction with the pigment. As explained at column 3 line 7 of Yamauchi et al., the epoxy compound functions as a cross-linking agent for the amino polyester resin in order to form a film.

Although Yamauchi et al. recites various additives that may be incorporated into their powder paint, the fact that the paint is a powder remains unchanged (column 7 lines 40-51). These additives may affect the properties of film formed from powder paint, but do not fulfill the

functions of a dispersant or solvent as recited in claims 5 and 9 as these functions are commonly understood. It is logical that dispersants or solvents would not be included in the Yamauchi et al. powder paint as they would serve no purpose for the paint itself and would be inconsistent with a powder composition. Applicants respectfully submit that Yamauchi et al. does not anticipate Applicants invention as claimed and request that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 1-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Ohnishi (US 5,747,599). Applicants traverse the rejection to the extent that it can be maintained.

Ohnishi discloses liquid and powder thermosetting coating compositions (column 2 line 14). The compositions comprise an epoxy compound, an aromatic sulfonium salt and a pigment. The aromatic sulfonium salt is a catalyst for ring opening cationic polymerization of the epoxy compound to form a coating film. The improvement to the thermosetting compositions resides in the selection of an aromatic sulfonium salt catalyst that provides improved storage stability, low temperature curability and improvement in the properties of the resulting film (column 2 line 66 to column 3 line 9). In other words, Ohnishi discloses a film forming, thermosetting coating composition wherein the film is a polyepoxy type formed by ring-opening polymerization of an epoxy group catalyzed by the aromatic sulfonium salt (column 3 lines 20-25).

Applicants respectfully submit that there is no basis to conclude that the compositions of Ohnishi anticipate their invention as claimed. Ohnishi fails to disclose, either expressly or inherently, a reaction between pigment and epoxy compound to provide a surface treatment of the pigment. The entire disclosure of Ohnishi with respect to pigment selection is premised on the pigment not interfering with the film forming polymerization reaction of the epoxy compound (columns 5-7). Applicants respectfully submit that Ohnishi does not anticipate Applicants invention as claimed and request that the rejection be withdrawn.

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In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

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